



**BAYLOR
COLLEGE OF
MEDICINE**

One Baylor Plaza
Texas Medical Center
Houston, Texas 77030

Michael E. DeBakey, M.D.

TEL: (713) 797-9353

FAX: (713) 793-1192

August 8, 2003

Mr. James A. Baker, III
Honorary Chair
Baker Institute for Public Policy
Rice University
P.O. Box 1892 - MS40
Houston, Texas 77251-1892

Dear Jim:

The enclosed copy of my letter to Dr. Harvey Fineberg, President of the Institute of Medicine, is self-explanatory. My purpose in sending this to you is to introduce the subject in order to solicit your wise counsel on a matter that I believe deserves urgent consideration.

As you know, there have been a number of political efforts to address the thorny health issues of the country before and after the establishment of Medicare. Moreover, politically, the Democrats have generally tried to usurp and exploit this issue to present themselves as being more concerned with the health of the people than Republicans. In general, their efforts may be characterized as providing greater expenditure of tax money, but lacking in focused and effectual ideas for improving the healthcare of the nation. A good example is Hillary Clinton's fated health initiative for which I was asked to write a commentary by Mr. Robert Hartley for the *Wall Street Journal* and which he published under the title "Prescription for Disaster."

Nonetheless, this topic is of growing concern and will undoubtedly be used in the political campaigns next year. I believe the Republican Party needs to address the issue, and one way to do this is to establish a Presidential Commission now that is directed toward a thorough investigation of the various factors involved in the problem and a "road map" toward its solution in accordance with American values and Republican "compassionate concern."

I realize that there is a plethora of pressing national and international issues facing the nation, including, homeland security. But no other subject countervails the pre-eminence of health for the individual citizen and, indeed, for the nation.

I would greatly appreciate your thoughts on this matter. My best wishes for your continued good health and spirit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike".

Michael E. DeBakey, M.D.

MED:cr

Enclosure